

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Claims 1 and 18 have been amended to clarify that process anomalies are classified using the map of the specimen current. Support for these amendments may be found in the specification as filed, for example at paragraphs 52-56. No new matter is added.

The present claims are patentable over Yamada et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,768,324. For example Yamada fails to describe a system in which a specimen current map is used to classify anomalies in a process used to create contact openings as recited in the claims. At best, Yamada indicates that contact hole quality can be classified based on the specimen current map (see col. 20, ll. 41-47). However, classifying quality of a contact hole is significantly different from classifying anomalies in a process that led to variations in contact hole characteristics. It is akin to distinguishing between cause and effect. Hence, because Yamada does not teach or suggest classifying process anomalies of the type recited in the present claims, the claims are patentable over this reference.

If any additional fee associated with this communication is required, including fees for extensions of time, which extensions of time are hereby requested, please charge Deposit Account No. 19-3140.

Respectfully submitted,

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